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NEW GRANT BRINGS KOREA TO THE MIDWEST



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**Mitchell Lerner**, Mershon affiliate, associate professor of history, and director of Ohio State's Institute for Korean Studies, is part of a major effort sponsored by the Korea Foundation to develop and coordinate Korean studies courses for undergraduate students at Big Ten Universities in partnership with colleagues in the Big Ten's Committee on Institutional Cooperation.



The Korea Foundation, an independent organization affiliated with the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, promotes academic and cultural exchange programs to enhance the image of Korea in the world.

Lerner specializes in North Korean policy and security studies and through that work became interested in South Korea, which he says, is, "poised to become one of the world's movers and shakers. It increasingly is assuming a significant position in world affairs, in politics and security, in economics and culture.

"Since I became director of Ohio State's Institute for Korean Studies two years ago, I've seen a growing need to increase awareness of Korea as an emerging global power," Lerner said.

"This new grant allows us to do just that. By tapping into the knowledge and expertise of Korean scholars at Ohio State and at other CIC universities we are able to collaborate in creating dynamic new courses for our undergraduates. It is a great opportunity to increase awareness and prepare our students for full engagement with a global community that will more and more involve partnerships with Korea."

At Ohio State, Lerner is working with the Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures — whose program in Korean language includes a wide range of courses in language, culture, literature-in translation, linguistics and art — and is nationally recognized as a leader in language instruction.

The first two courses will be premiering spring semester 2014. *Controversies in Contemporary Korea*, is offered jointly by Ohio State, University of Michigan, and Michigan State University. *North Korea Beyond Images* is offered jointly by Ohio State, University of Wisconsin, and Indiana University.

*North Korea Beyond Images* explores the visual cultures of North Korea, which uses various forms of visual media to showcase its state power and ideology, to write history, and to represent memory to the people of North Korea and the world. Students will examine genres that include art and architecture, murals and posters, photography and film, museums and cemeteries, and processions/parades. Students are expected to develop a critical perspective on both the politics of representation and the role of the media in use.

*Controversies in Contemporary Korea* examines contemporary controversies in Korea (North and South) to provide a broader understanding of the very recent history of the birthplace of the "Korean Wave," or ("Hallyu," in Korean) — the pop culture phenomenon of Korean entertainment: pop music, TV dramas and movies rolling across the world; the "Miracle on the Han River" —South Korea's postwar export-fueled economic growth; including rapid industrialization, technological achievement, education boom, and rapid modernization; along with the politics of North Korea and the "Axis of Evil."

The idea of offering these courses simultaneously to 36 students on three campuses in a completely interactive situation with face-to-face dialog is ambitious and yes—daring, but ultimately may serve as a model to take learning without borders to a new level.

Lerner was elected to the governing council of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations in 2008 and is on the

advisory board of the North Korea International Documentation Project, directed by the Cold War International History Project at the Wilson Center for Scholars.

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